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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Chief Justice Presents Awards For Exemplary Court Service and Leadership**

### ***Honors for San Bernardino Court Exec and Director, Staff of AOC Office of General Counsel***

San Francisco—Chief Justice Ronald M. George has presented special awards for exemplary service and leadership in the judicial branch to Tressa Sloan Kentner, Court Executive Officer of the Superior Court of San Bernardino, and Michael Bergeisen, General Counsel and Deputy Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)—and to the Office of General Counsel, which he leads.

Both awards were presented at the recent Judicial Branch Annual Conference in San Diego.

#### **TRESSA KENTNER**

Ms. Kentner has served as the Court Executive Officer of the Superior Court of San Bernardino County since 1994. Before that, she worked in the Sonoma County Superior and Municipal Courts as their Court Executive Officer.

“For more than 15 years, Tressa has demonstrated extraordinary leadership not only in San Bernardino, but statewide,” said Chief Justice George. “In her local venue, her accomplishments have been innovative, effective—and non-stop. She led the merger of superior and municipal court functions into a fully unified Clerk’s office. She has re-engineered case processing, and used automation and technology to improve all aspects of the Clerk’s functions. Under her guidance, technological tools are used to assess staff needs, and an automated records management system has been installed.”

The Chief Justice noted that Ms. Kentner has made her expertise and experience available statewide through years of service to the Judicial Council and many of its advisory committees and work groups. Ms.

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Kentner just ended her second term as an advisory member of the Judicial Council—her first was from 1992 to 1995. She served on the council’s Executive and Planning Committee and the Litigation Management Committee.

She chaired the Court Executives Advisory Committee and initiated the development of bylaws for the group, facilitated broad participation in work groups to address branch and court issues, and generally reached out to the court administration community statewide to encourage collaboration and communication.

“Tressa has done all this despite a hearing impairment,” Chief Justice George noted. “This impairment is never an excuse—and if it shows in any way, it is through the close attention she pays to a speaker. And that attribute is far more than an aid to hearing better—her close and careful attention is also evidence of her deep interest in others and her commitment to exchanging views and learning from one other.”

### **MICHAEL BERGEISEN AND THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

Mr. Bergeisen has served as the AOC’s General Counsel since 1995, coming to the agency after 16 years in private practice both in a law firm and in a corporate environment. The mission of the Office of General Counsel, which he leads, is to provide comprehensive legal services to the Judicial Council, its advisory committees and task forces, the appellate and trial courts, and the Administrative Office of the Courts itself.

“We all have benefited enormously from the professionalism of the Office of General Counsel, and from the leadership and commitment of Michael Bergeisen,” Chief Justice George said. “He is always responsive, and is a thoughtful, thorough, and skilled lawyer who has helped develop an office that embodies those same qualities. Our branch is most fortunate to have his assistance and the services of the fine attorneys and staff who work closely with him every day.”

OGC provides a wide range of legal services to the courts. For example, the Litigation Management Program investigates and resolves all claims and disputes affecting the trial and appellate courts. Other projects include the recently-conducted Early Mediation Pilot Program, which showed great success in reducing the incidence of trials, and the Complex Civil Litigation Program, established in 2000 to aid trial courts in effectively handling complex cases.

OGC also provides legal services and advice to judicial branch clients on court facilities issues, labor and employment matters, court administration issues, and business operations and contracting. Members of OGC staff serve also as counsel to Judicial Council Advisory Committees and help draft proposed rules of court and forms and reports to the Council.

*The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.*

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